THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) to (c) The percentage of income to cost of Lower Koti Branch Post Office in Shimla District is 8.2% whereas, as per the prescribed norms the percentage of income to cost of a Branch Post Office in a hilly area should be at least 15%. Therefore, there is no proposal to upgrade Lower Koti Branch Post Office to a Departmental Sub-Post Office.

Interests of I.T. workers in U.K.

2629. DR. C. NARAYANA REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether any survey has been conducted by a trade body of U.K. on the Indian Information Technology workers;

(b) whether it is a fact that the U.K. based Indian Information Technology workers are worried over the trend of 'Indians go home' in U.K.; and

(c) if so, the steps Government propose to take to safeguard their interests in U.K.

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) Government is not aware of any such survey.

(b) Government has not received any such feedback.

(c) Does not arise.

Software exports

2630. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that software exports came down after September 11, 2001 terrorist attack in America;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) what was the impact of such sudden slump in software exports on our domestic market; and

(d) the efforts taken by Government to improve software exports?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) to (d) No, Sir. The software and services exports from India generated revenue of Rs. 9,100 crore in the third quarter (October-December) of 2001-2002, as compared to Rs. 7270 crore for the corresponding period in the previous year, with a rise of 25%.

Telephone services by BSNL in rural areas

†2631. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have provided an amount of Rs. 800 crore to BSNL which is providing telephone service in rural areas, for not completing the work;

(b) if so, the reasons thereof;

(c) the measures being taken by Government to connect rural areas with telecommunication service and to provide better service; and

(d) the part of population of the country, connected with the telephone facilities, so far togetherwith the areas still deprived of it?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) and (b) An amount of Rs. 2300 crores representing licence fee has been reimbursed to BSNL for providing telephone services in rural areas. In addition, a requirement of Rs. 1100 crores for VPTs was projected in 2001-2002. However, only Rs. 720 crores have been accepted by the Planning Commission towards the budgetary support.

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†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.